

Singapore Perspectives 2013, out in Book and 'Residual' Form

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Any cultural system, according to British cultural historian Raymond Williams, comprises a set of relations among residual, dominant and emergent forms. The residual forms refer to practices that were formed in the past but are still active in the present. The dominant forms make up the pre-eminent value and meaning system that governs our lives. Finally, the emergent forms represent the new meanings and values, new relationships and new practices that are being created.

Williams' theoretical concepts provided the inspiration to the content of the Singapore Perspectives 2013 conference. Held on 28 January 2013, the annual flagship conference of the Institute of Policy Studies saw the gathering of thought leaders, politicians and policymakers to discuss pertinent issues pertaining to governance in Singapore, as informed by the country's past, present and future. The conference was segmented into three sections, which were aptly named: The Residual, The Dominant and The Emergent.

Months have passed since Singapore Perspectives 2013 but the issues and ideas raised during the conference continue to reverberate throughout society. For instance, meritocracy and zero-tolerance of corruption, central principles of governance, are still being debated by many. Other questions remain, such as the shape of civil society in the future and whether a sense of trust could be fostered among the people of Singapore.

Such relevance makes the recently published *Singapore Perspectives 2013: Governance* a useful reference guide for any reader interested in policymaking, active citizenry and civil society. The book consists of all the speeches and presentations made by the conference's speakers. These include Prof. Chan Heng Chee's reflections on governance in Singapore and its history and legacy; Prof. Kishore Mahbubani's three proposed scenarios for Singapore's political future; and Member of Parliament and Workers' Party Chairperson Sylvia Lim's discussion on the role of political competition in promoting the well-being of the people. The book also contains an edited transcript of the spirited dialogue session between Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the audience.

As a "residual" form of the Singapore Perspectives 2013 conference, this book adds to the ongoing conversations on governance and policymaking in this country.

Singapore Perspectives 2013: Governance is available in major bookstores at S\$28.

The views expressed are the author's and do not represent those of the Institute.

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